

## Abstract 315

**TITLE:** Urban American Indian Women and HIV Risk: The Role of Trauma and Substance Use

**AUTHORS:** Simoni, JM (Yeshiva University); Walters. KL (Columbia University)

**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES:** The paucity of HIV research addressing American Indians (AIs) and HIV/AIDS is startling. Although great heterogeneity exists among the over 400 federally recognized tribes in the United States, epidemiological data point to this group overall as one at potentially high risk for HIV due to substance abuse, poverty, low access to medical care and domestic violence. In this paper, we report findings from the preliminary stages of HIV needs assessment among AIs New York City. The survey, aimed to inform community-based HIV prevention approaches, focused on patterns and predictors of sexual and drug risk behaviors.

**METHODS:** Two AI women known to the community were trained to recruit a convenience sample of AIs at a Pow Wow in an outer borough of NYC in the summer of 1997. Respondents received \$5 for completing the self-administered questionnaire (which took about 30 minutes).

**RESULTS:** The 68 female respondents indicated generally high levels of HIV knowledge and self-efficacy for safer behavior and low levels of perceived risk. Few had ever injected drugs and 54% had been tested for HIV. However, 38% had used alcohol or other drugs in the last six months and, among the 59% who reported sexual activity in this period, 97% had used condoms inconsistently or not at all. Alarming, 44% reported lifetime trauma, including domestic violence (25%) and physical (27%) or sexual (27%) assault by a family member or stranger. Consistent with a postcolonial theoretical framework, trauma was a better predictor of HIV risk behavior than social cognitive variables. Moreover, logistic regression analysis  $\chi^2 (2, N = 64) = 22.91, p < .000$ , Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic  $= .05, df = 2, p = .98$  indicated AOD use (OR = 9.85, 95% CI = 2.85, 34.00) but not non-partner sexual assault predicted sexual risk behaviors when both predictors were in the same regression equation, suggesting mediation.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The findings are discussed with reference to suggestions for community-based interventions.

**PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jane Marie Simoni

**Address:** Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology  
1300 Morris Park Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461

**Telephone:** (718) 430-3958

**Fax:** (718) 430-3960

**E-mail:** [jsimon@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:jsimon@aecom.yu.edu)